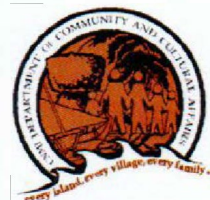


Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Department of Community and Cultural Affairs

Office of the Secretary



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Childcare

Licensing Program

Garapan Street Market

February 16, 2021

Director
Office of Child Care
330 C ST SW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20201

Dear OCC Director:

This letter describes how the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) plans to use the Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) awarded under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA). We understand that this description will be used for the purpose of informing the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families and Congress how our Lead Agency anticipates using the funds to support the child care needs in our jurisdiction.

We plan to use CRRSA funds for activities in the following categories:

Direct Services/Subsidies

- The CNMI will use the funds to support child care subsidy assistance to individuals identified as front line and/or essential workers.

Implementation of Virus Mitigation Policies and Practices

The CNMI will use the funds to provide resources such as cleaning and sanitation supplies, PPE's, masks, as well as minor construction of hand washing stations (for example installation of sinks near entrances) to support implementation of health and safety policies and practices in line with guidance from the Child Care Licensing Program (CCLP) as well as from the Center of Disease Control and Prevention.

- The CNMI will use the funds to provide technical assistance (TA) to implement and comply with CCLP's Covid-19 Health and Safety Re-Opening Plans.

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- These funds will be made available through a grant process to all License Center base programs, both CCDF and Non-CCDF providers as well as License-Exempt Family, Friend, and Neighbor (LE-FFN) care, and License-Exempt Emergency Child Care Provider (LE-ECC).

Grants or Assistance (Other than Subsidies) to Stabilize Child Care Providers

- Through a grant process the CNMI will support providers to stabilize their programs. Grant money may be used to support increased operating expenses-such as continued full time pay/salary for all child care teachers, caregivers, staff and other employees.
- CRRSA funds will also be used to support a monthly stipend to all providers.

Assistance to Providers Not Participating in the Subsidy System Prior to the Pandemic

- Grant assistance will be made available to all non-CCDF providers to support operational expenses, the purchase of cleaning and sanitation supplies, as well as support for technical assistance to meet CCLP.s Covid-19 Health and Safety Re-Opening Plan.
- Funds will also support non-CCDF providers' professional development (training and TA will be offered free of charge) focusing on health and safety and implementation of Covid-19 Safety Protocols.

Other

- Hire additional staff for Saipan, Rota, and Tinian for capacity building to support CCDF activities (eligibility, health and safety, and quality activities).
- The CNMI will also use the funds to expand on the initiative System of Support or SoS for License-Exempt Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care (LE-FFN).
- Establish and Implement a program to increase parents' and teachers' knowledge of scientifically based research and strategies for promoting the health and well-being of young children:
 - Training and Technical Assistance on Mind in the Making (MITM) and Vroom for providers, families and the community
 - Purchase of resources such as educational materials and equipment to implement MITM as well as printing of materials

- The CNMI will also use the funds to address/meet Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Star Levels 1, 2, and 3 Standards. The 6 QRIS standards include **Health and Safety**, Child growth and Development, Staffing and Professional Development, Children with Disabilities, Family Engagement and Strengthening, and Leadership and Management.
- The CNMI will also use the funds to implement a system for Mental Health Consultations
 - Training and Technical Assistance to providers on how to implement mental health consultations in their programs
- The CNMI will also use the funds to support community-based non-profit Summer and Afterschool Programs to:
 - purchase educational materials, supplies, and equipment.
 - Training and TA to support best practices for school age children
- The CNMI will also use the funds to support the health, mental health, and well-being of all providers, whether CCDF or Non-CCDF providers by:
 - Offering training and TA on health, mental health, and well being
 - Providing resources to address health, mental health and well being
 - Supporting providers to participate in events that emphasizes better health, mental health and well-being. For example: paying the fees for community-based exercise activities
- Bring CNMI health and safety regulations more in alignment with industry best practice and implementation of health and safety regulations
- Enhance professional development supports to provide needed coaching and training
- Build data system capacity and assist with continued implementation of data system to track, report, and monitor early childhood programs

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands-CNMI will amend our CCDF plan as a result of activities implemented under CRRSA funding not currently described in the plan, within 60 days of implementation.

Sincerely,

/s/

Joseph P. DeLeon Guerrero
Secretary
Department of Community and Cultural Affairs
Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands

cc: Paul Noski, Regional Program Manager, Office of Child Care,
Christina Warren, Program Specialist, Office of Child Care, Region 9
Joshua Lee, Program Specialist, Office of Child Care, Region 10